



one memorable night

One Memorable Night by Emma Winslow

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Genre: Angst, Romance

Language: English

Characters: J. Hopper, Joyce B.

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2018-01-20 16:55:17

Updated: 2018-01-20 16:55:17

Packaged: 2019-12-17 00:22:52

Rating: T

Chapters: 1

Words: 2,875

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: It's the winter of 1959, and the night of Hawkins High School's senior prom. Will Jim Hopper find the courage to tell Joyce how he feels about her? And if he does, will she choose him over Lonnie Byers? Either way, this will be a memorable night for the both of them. (Hopper x Joyce one-shot)

One Memorable Night

This was written based off a response to a headcanon David Harbour posted on Twitter [here](#). I hope this pleases my fellow Joyce/Hopper shippers.

It was the winter of '59.

Smoke curled in the cold air as it escaped the open car window, only briefly visible before the harsh winter wind swept it into nothingness. Another drag, more smoke, and then its disappearance, this pattern occurring every few seconds as Jim Hopper took each drag of the cigarette between his fingers.

However, he was not distracted by this repetitive process— *no*, he was entirely focused on the lit up doors of Hawkins High's gymnasium, and who was entering them. Every few minutes couples would abandon parked cars and scurry towards the doors, anxious for warmth as the harsh winter air whipped at their skin, at dress skirts and done-up hair.

They hadn't arrived yet, the pair he was waiting for, and in another few minutes his cigarette was through. He flicked the butt out of the window, the end giving a tiny, inaudible sizzle as it landed in snow. He reached for his pack of Camels again. Out popped another and the lighter flickered at its end before that reassuring orange glow appeared. Jim briefly looked up during this process, hawk-eyes making their way back to the doors.

Then there she was— with *him*, of course, to Jim's disgust. Joyce— the one person who perhaps understood the blunt, emotionless yet temperamental asshole that Jim Hopper was. She was accompanied by her boyfriend Lonnie, whom Jim would always believe to be a self-serving, arrogant **dick** who was completely undeserving of Joyce.

But was Jim any more deserving of her?

That thought was perhaps what had stopped him for plucking up the courage to tell Joyce how she made him feel— that she was capable of

actually making him *feel* something inside the stoic shell. It should have been him walking her into that cheesily decorated gymnasium, hand on her lower back, looking down at the petite girl and being in awe of his luck to have her by his side. But instead it was Lonnie Byers who walked through the unforgiving wind with Joyce, while Jim sat in his steel blue GTO and attempted to finish a pack of cigs in depressing solitude.

She looked beautiful— though she did no matter what she was wearing, how her hair looked... He watched as she tugged her thick coat close to her body, black skirt peeking out of the bottom as they hurried into the open doorway, ushered in by a chaperone. The light only extended into the bleak evening shadows for a brief moment until the door shut again, and then all was in darkness once more, including Jim.

He didn't know why he was even there, really. It was pretty goddamn pathetic, sitting in the parking lot like some weirdo just to catch a glimpse of what he would never have. Jim tossed the only half-smoked cigarette into the snow before he reached down to roll the window back up, basking in the warmth that was slowly refilling the car now that the cold air could no longer seep in. Then he reached for the radio dial and turned up the volume, the deep, reverberating tones of Pat Boone's voice filling up the car.

Jim gave a sigh, leaning his head back against the headrest and staring at the upper interior of his car in silence (apart from the radio, of course). If only he had let himself believe he could be better for Joyce than Lonnie— if he had believed that, he wouldn't be in this *pathetic* situation.

But how could he believe that? When she had chosen Lonnie— obviously that meant he had nothing better to offer, right?

And yet, something inside Jim Hopper told him that this assumption was false. Joyce and Lonnie had their good moments, which Jim often witnessed, to his own *chagrin*— but their relationship wasn't all smiles and rainbows. They fought quite often, and when they did, Lonnie was rarely, if at all, ever the one to apologize first.

This, Jim knew, because every time Joyce would come to her friend

for advice and consolation, in tears over another fight with Lonnie, often she took resolving the issue into her own hands by deciding to go apologize to Lonnie first... Even if it wasn't entirely her fault and he advised her strongly against it. And Jim knew Lonnie was never as deeply affected by these fights with Joyce as she was– Jim would find out about him going off and drinking with friends in the aftermath, partying, talking to other girls and forgetting his relationship issues while Joyce cried in Jim's arms about them.

However, that was perhaps the one good thing about these fights– Jim could spend more time with Joyce, and as her dating Lonnie had caused them to hang out less and less, it was nice for their friendship to almost return to how it had been before. It always happened the same way– Joyce would come to Jim, hurt and upset and seeking a friend's company, knowing she could trust him more than anyone else. Jim would tell her to hop in the GTO and they'd drive to an open field near the thick Hawkins woods where he'd offer her a smoke and they'd sit on the hood of the car, basking in the small-town silence and gazing at the stars above while the car radio played quietly in the background. They were like the smoke that escaped their mouths with every drag– meeting and curling together at one moment into a perfect cloud of grey, and the next dissipating entirely with no evidence it had ever happened.

Most of the time, these moments ended with Jim's arm around her, her petite frame resting against his perfectly, and him mentally counting down from three and telling himself when he hit "*one*", he'd tell her she belonged with *him*, not Lonnie.

Of course, the words never left his mouth, leaving him feeling like a coward as they clambered back into the car to drive home.

Jim was snatched out of his inward reveling by shouts coming from the gym. He immediately sat up, looking over to figure out what was going on. The door was open again, only this time, Joyce and Lonnie were exiting. Or rather, Joyce was leaving as Lonnie held the door open just slightly, and they were in a heated argument. Jim couldn't make out exactly what they were saying, but Joyce's body was rigid as she gestured wildly while arguing. Lonnie looked exasperated, and she said something once more before he threw his hands up and went back inside, the door slamming shut behind him.

Jim's eyes narrowed slightly as Joyce stood there for a moment, a blast of wind messing up her hair and making her clutch tightly at the sides of her coat. She turned on her heel and began to walk across the road, face downward to watch her steps on the slightly snowy ground, expression somewhat contorted in solemn thought.

This was his chance— the moment to be brave where he'd once before been a coward.

With haste Jim rolled the window down, arm pumping with fierce desperation as she kept walking, hardly noticing her surroundings.

"Joyce! Hey, get over here!"

She finally looked up, eyes taking a moment to locate the person attached to the voice— she spotted him, and the sorrowful expression flickered to one of relief.

"Jim?" she breathed out, barely loud enough for him to hear. She carefully picked up the pace, trying not to take a spill and embarrass herself as she approached the passenger side. Jim's heart was racing as he watched her scurry towards his car, and he licked his dry lips as he realized just what he was planning to do. Could he actually go through with it?

"What the hell are you doing just sitting in the parking lot?" Joyce wheezed as she slipped into the passenger seat, breathing out loudly as the cold was shut out and she was enveloped in a bubble of warm air. "It's a little creepy, you know."

"Just making sure everyone gets in safely," he shrugged simply, reaching into his jacket to tug out the box of cigs. He popped open the lid and offered the box to her— Joyce gave a small smile before plucking out one of the contents, Jim doing the same and putting it between his lips to search for his lighter.

Once both of their cigarettes were lit, each having taken a drag, he continued.

"And I wanted to be here in case something like exactly what just happened, happened," Jim added with a particular look sent her way,

causing her features to contort in shame and disappointment.

"I stupidly thought we could avoid fighting on the best night of senior year," she said as she stared out of the windowshield, elbow resting on the door rest while her fingers held the cigarette between them. She turned her face to look at Jim, eyes full of disbelief, as if aimed towards herself and her own naivety. "I just wanted *one* memorable night, you know?"

Jim stared back at her, not betraying his feelings in his face as she often did, but wondering what to say to keep her from running out and finding Lonnie to make up, yet also to make her feel better.

"What happened?" he asked lowly before he breathed smoke out of his open window, watching it evaporate quickly.

"I wanted to dance; he wanted to run off and... well, you know," she finished lamely, cheeks going a little red at the confession.

"What's so bad about that?" Jim asked as he turned to face her again, an amused smirk on his face. "It's not like you two haven't before."

She rapped against his arm with her free hand, rolling her eyes as his grin grew.

"I *know*, but it's **different** tonight," she argued, sighing in exasperation. "It's *senior prom*. I don't want to just run around acting immature and hiding in bleachers and empty rooms like we're some pathetic, horny teenagers. I want it to go the way prom is *meant* to go— I want us to drink shitty punch, to dance to cheesy love songs and make fun of what Powell is wearing— by the way, he's wearing a tie that looked like someone puked on it."

Jim couldn't retain his laugh, though he tried, which resulted in a snort. There was a chain reaction and Joyce gave a laugh, unable to help herself. But she tried, forcing the laughs to die down so she could finish making her point.

"I just wanted us to be kids, to be stupidly happy and ignorant, one last night before this is all over."

Jim had gone quite serious at that point, and how he wished he could

have fulfilled this desire for her. He could have, had he made the right choice before tonight. He was thinking while she took another drag, trying to figure out what to say to make it all better.

"I guess listening to Pat Boone and ingesting nicotine doesn't help really do much more for that either, huh?"

"It's a little bit better," she assured him with a nod and little smirk. "But really, Jim— why are you here? You don't have a date and you hate school functions. What's the point of sitting out here in the cold all night, near the fun but not in it?"

His lungs suddenly tightened, his stomach fell to the floor— how should he respond? He flicked the ash from his cigarette out the window, thinking. He had never been good at coming up with the right answer at the right time, hence his bad reputation as a student. But this was different than being shitty at school— this was about Joyce, and how badly he wanted her to know how special she was to him.

"I was here for you," he admitted, only glancing at her briefly before turning his head to stare right out the windshield, scared to look at the change in expression he was certain was occurring on her lovely face. "I thought there might be a chance for me to fix something I messed up."

"'Messed up?' What do you mean? You don't have to fix anything."

Jim still wouldn't look at her, terrified, and even somewhat paralyzed.

"I made a mistake letting Lonnie win you over, letting him take you to this dance— I was a *coward*."

His cigarette smoldered, waiting for him to take another drag, but he couldn't even bring it to his lips he was so frightened of his own admission, and what might follow.

"You think so?" Joyce asked softly, her features gentle and her eyes entirely on him.

"Yeah, I do," he suddenly said strongly, turning his face and finally

displaying a fierce courage in his mature features.

Neither said anything for a minute, and he took that as a bad thing—he lost what courage he'd plucked up and turned his face again, his hand in a fist shaking in his lap. God dammit— now he looked like a *complete* idiot. He should have just kept his mouth shut and let her go on believing she was only ever a friend to him.

But then in his peripheral vision he saw her coming near— he allowed his face to tilt just a little, almost as if not wanting to be *too* hopeful, and she was leaning from her seat towards him. He didn't know what to do, so he let her do it for him. She'd tossed her cigarette out the window, and was now placing her small hands on the sides of his face. His eyelids lowered as she turned his face just a bit and planted a slow, tender kiss on his cheek.

"Jim Hopper," she murmured, that little close-lipped smile coming onto her face. "You're anything *but* a coward."

He wanted to believe her, but he still wasn't so sure about that.

"If I wasn't a coward, you'd be having your perfect, memorable night right now, I would have made sure of it," Jim scoffed, though still a little soft at the feel of her hands on his face and her own face so near his.

"But I am," she told him seriously, gazing directly into his eyes. "You make every night I spend with you memorable."

Jim's eyes subconsciously lit up at her words, and that confirmation alone gave him the resilience to go completely through with this. He grabbed her wrists, pulling her hands to his chest as he leaned closer and kissed her fervently. Joyce responded warmly, even though she perhaps knew it was a bad idea. But her mind had already forgotten Lonnie and now it was just her, Jim, and the smell of cigarettes.

"Joyce! Joyce! Where the hell are you?"

Jim and Joyce broke apart, confused by the voice calling for her. They both glanced out the window, and saw, perhaps to both their disappointments, that Lonnie had left the gym and was searching for

Joyce in the cold.

They returned their gazes to each other, and Joyce bit her lip as he searched her face for a decision.

What would she do?

"Looks like you still have a chance at that memorable night," he chuckled, though it was pretty forced.

"Jim—"

"No— Joyce, you have to go drink shitty punch, dancy to cheesy love songs, and laugh at Powell's tie," he urged her, putting on a small, fake smile. "Don't let me get in the way of that."

And, of course, Lonnie had come looking for her, meaning maybe he'd actually apologize to her. Of *course* Lonnie decided to change for the better right when Jim had found the bravery to speak up.

"If you think I should go," she began slowly, forcing down her disappointment. "Then— then I'll go."

"I think you should," he stated firmly, and her throat clogged up as it was punched by his words. She moved away from him, reaching for the door handle hesitantly before pushing the door open and stepping out of the car. The cool wind made the tears in her eyes sting, and she blinked hastily before walking around the car to approach Lonnie.

"Listen, babe— I'm sorry..."

Joyce met Lonnie and he wrapped his arm around her to lead her back to the gymnasium.

Jim stared after their figures as they disappeared into the brightness of the gym, then reached for his pack of Camels once more and pulled a cigarette out.

The steel blue GTO soon backed out of the parking spot and zoomed away from Hawkins High School, smoking flying out the window only to disappear into nothingness all over again.